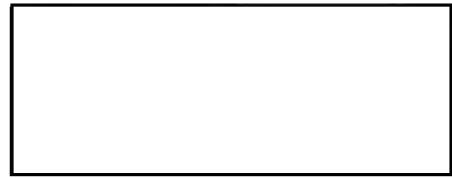


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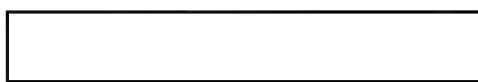
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SOUTH VIETNAM: The government is about to release some controversial political prisoners, a move that may improve relations with some of its critics.

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[redacted] Nearly half of those to be freed are Buddhists chosen from a list submitted by a leader of the An Quang Buddhists, the country's strongest opposition group.

The continued imprisonment of Buddhists has long been regarded by An Quang leaders as one of their biggest grievances against the government. The amnesty would follow Thieu's attendance earlier this month at the funeral of An Quang's titular leader--a gesture that was well received by the Buddhists.

These actions will cause the Buddhists to look a bit more favorably on the government. Nevertheless, significant An Quang grievances remain and their suspicions of Thieu are deeply ingrained. The government has indicated that not all Buddhists are being released, and those who are will still have restrictions on their rights as citizens.

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The new releases probably are partially aimed at undercutting the Communist campaign for the release of all civilian detainees. The Communists, who have been claiming that Saigon holds up to 200,000 political prisoners, are sure to condemn the move as a drop in the bucket.

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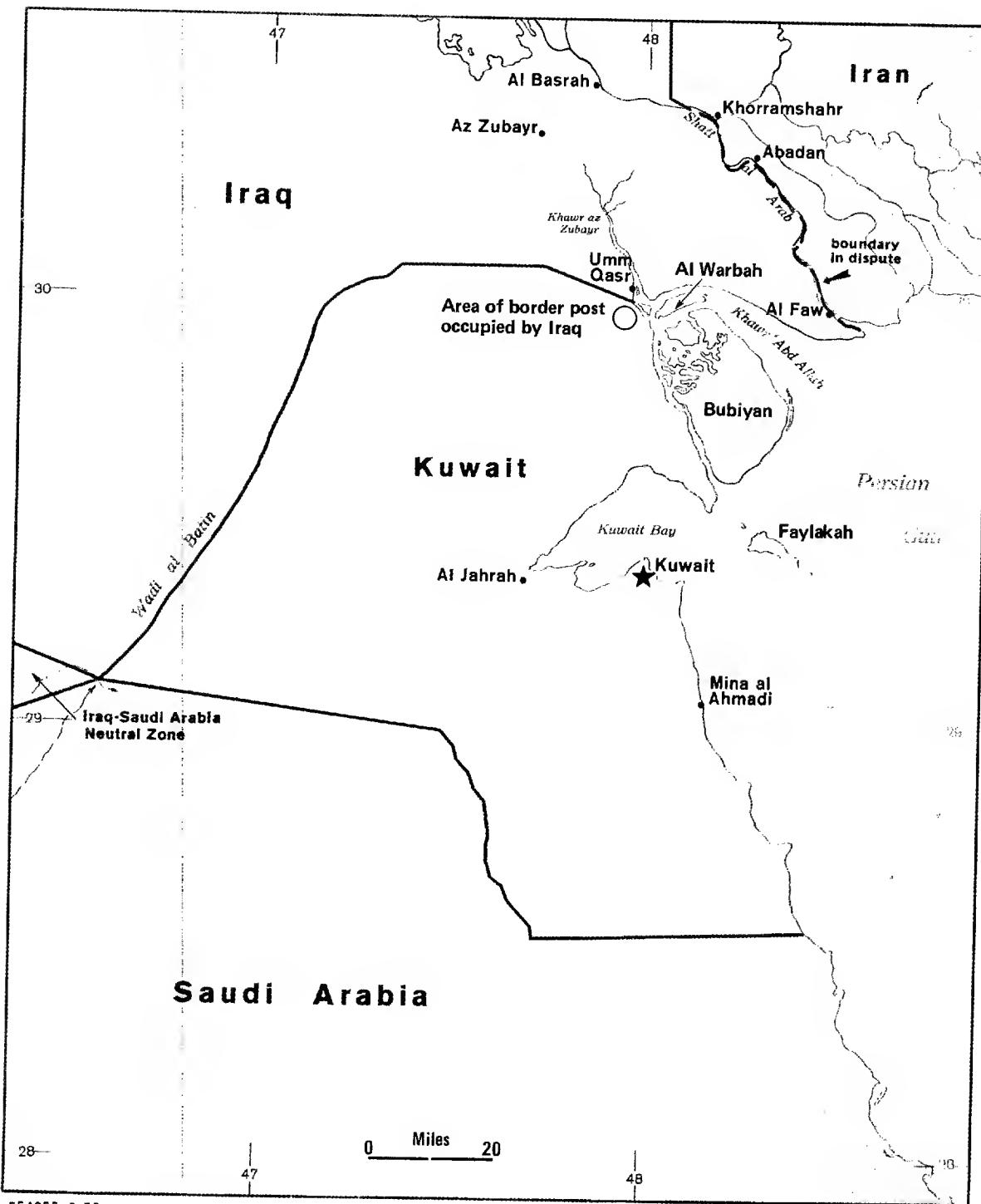
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KUWAIT-IRAQ: There seems little prospect for a quick resolution of the dispute over Iraq's seizure of a Kuwaiti border post on 20 March.

Kuwait reportedly has rejected an Iraqi proposal that each side withdraw six miles from its present position. The proposal was transmitted by one of several emissaries from Arab states who are attempting to mediate the impasse. Kuwaiti officials say they will not bargain over Iraqi withdrawal from the occupied post. Despite its present belligerent mood, Kuwait is unlikely to undertake retaliatory military moves. However, it is taking some action against Iraqis in Kuwait, including closure of Iraqi news service offices.

Iraq for its part has larger purposes in mind which militate against acquiescence in Kuwait's demands for a unilateral pull-back. Baghdad's primary interest is in protecting its naval base at Umm Qasr, which is situated within a few miles of the Kuwaiti border post, and in maintaining control of a security road near Umm Qasr which Iraq recently constructed in Kuwaiti territory.

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will only complicate the negotiating process. The prospects thus are for a prolonged period of negotiations in which increased tensions will heighten the possibility of precipitate actions by both parties.

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EAST GERMANY: East Germany's debt to the industrial West now stands at approximately \$900 million. Last year the debt increased by \$200 million, largely because of political concerns. The regime has put a heavy emphasis on supplying consumer goods to the population in order to ensure political stability as it makes the transition from isolation to a more active international role. At the same time, party chief Honecker enforced a commitment that all export quotas for the Soviets would be met or surpassed. As a result, this year the East Germans are seeking at least \$200 million more in credits from the West, including the US. West Germany and France have given Pankow most of its new credits. The East German economy is probably strong enough, and its subsidized trade with West Germany large enough, for Pankow to operate this way for two or three more years before being pinched by repayment problems.

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*URUGUAY: The military's denunciation last night over radio and television of the government's "moral deterioration" appears to have stripped away all pretense to civilian control of the country. The accusation was prompted by alleged congressional obstruction to the implementation of the armed forces development plan to halt the economic decay that has plagued the country for the past two decades. President Bordaberry had agreed to the economic recovery plans in order to end the mid-February military rebellion. Although the military's anger is now aimed at congress, it is not inconceivable that it could be redirected to force Bordaberry out of office. In any event, what little control the President had in civilian matters following the rebellion has been weakened. If Bordaberry continues in office he undoubtedly will be forced more openly into a commitment to govern in accordance with military directives.

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*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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